



United States Department of Agriculture



Marketing and
Regulatory Programs

Animal and Plant
Health Inspection
Service

Veterinary Services

National Veterinary
Services Laboratories

Center for
Veterinary Biologics

P.O. Box 844
1800 Dayton Avenue
Ames, IA 50010
(515) 663-7266
FAX (515) 663-7397

Research,
Education, and
Economics

Agricultural
Research Service

Midwest Area

National Animal
Disease Center

P.O. Box 70
2300 Dayton Avenue
Ames, IA 50010
(515) 663-7201
FAX (515) 663-7677

Federal Relay Service
(Voice/TTY/ASCII/Spanish)
1-800-877-8339

November 15, 2004

SUBJECT: Policy Covering Hazardous Weather Conditions

TO: NCAH Employees-Ames Campus and
ARS Employees on the ISU Campus

I. COVERED EMPLOYEES

This policy covers all employees of the National Centers for Animal Health (NCAH)-- Ames Campus as well as all ARS employees located on the Iowa State University (ISU) campus.

NOTE: ARS employees located on the ISU Campus includes the National Soil Tilth Lab, Swine Odor and Manure Management Research Unit, Plant Introduction Research Unit, and the Corn Insects and Crop Genetics Research Unit.

For the purposes of this policy, the use of NCAH throughout this document will apply to all employees described within Section I.

II. PURPOSE

To provide for the safety and uniform treatment of all employees of the NCAH during conditions of hazardous weather.

III. POLICY

All employees are to assume, unless otherwise officially notified, that their work facility will be open each regular workday regardless of weather conditions that may develop. Employees are normally expected to cope with difficult driving conditions or disruptions of public transportation facilities and arrive at work on time. During times of hazardous weather conditions, liberal policies will be applied to the granting of leave and approval of flex time and core time deviations. In an effort to better align NCAH policy with the community in which the laboratories, offices, and other related facilities are located and to simplify the notification process, the NCAH will follow the Ames Public School District regarding hazardous winter weather-related closings and delays. This policy only applies to hazardous weather-related decisions, and only applies to decisions/ announcements made prior to the beginning of official business hours, which are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. When the Ames Public School District announces a pre-8:00 a.m. hazardous winter weather-related closing or delay, the NCAH will adhere to

that decision. NCAH will no longer issue closing or delay notifications through radio or television stations. When, for example, the Ames Public School System announces a District-wide 2-hour delay due to weather conditions, this will apply to the NCAH as well. Because the NCAH business hours start at 8:00 a.m., a 2-hour delay means that the NCAH will open at 10:00 a.m. for that day. If there is any question or doubt regarding the NCAH weather-related status on any given day, all employees can call (515) 663-7711 for recorded verification. If there is no recorded announcement of closings or delays when calling the verification number, this means we are following normal business hours. Decisions regarding closings/dismissals during business hours are decided on a case-by-case basis and are independent of whatever the Ames Public School System may decide to do and the NCAH policy for these circumstances as described under section IV., which follow.

IV. DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

A. Once NCAH business hours have started (8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday), the decision to close or to permit early dismissal at the laboratories, offices, and other related facilities will be at the discretion of the NCAH Board of Directors unless the Board has delegated this authority to another designated appointee.

B. Early dismissal of employees, except those in the essential positions, will be announced as described above. Essential employees are employees who must continue working to perform essential services to protect life and property even when normal activities are necessarily reduced during an emergency period. **Notice to APHIS employees only: Completion or initiation of tests is not considered an essential function for the purposes of this memo.**

When the decision is made, an announcement will be made via loud speaker and e-mail to all NCAH employees. Supervisors shall ensure that employees without this type of access are immediately notified. During the day, if you wish to check the status of the decision, you may call (515) 663-7711. When the decision is made, the message at this number will be changed accordingly.

No individual early dismissals, without charge to leave, will be authorized. Employees who request personal leave after official notice of an early dismissal but before the time of closure will only be charged leave until the time of closure and will receive official leave to complete their tour of duty. During times of hazardous weather, APHIS employees will be granted flexible use of the mandatory 30-minute lunch period. This means that, regardless of what time one has their lunch period scheduled, if early dismissal is authorized, employees will be allowed the flexibility to take their lunch period any time during the officially designated times of 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (Aspen Park employees are allowed a lunch period of 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.)

Employees who leave before official notice of dismissal or are in any leave category prior to the day of the closure will be continued in that category insofar as the leave was planned to continue.

V. LEAVE CHARGES

When weather conditions are difficult or not uniform in the commuting area, a liberal leave policy will be in effect without advance approval of the supervisor. However, an employee electing to use leave is expected to notify his or her supervisor within 30 minutes after the scheduled reporting time.

Supervisors may excuse tardiness not in excess of 2 hours when they consider such tardiness to be unavoidable and weather related. This is an exception to the normal 1-hour limitation on the amount of tardiness which may be excused without charge to leave.

When the employee exceeds 2 hours, the supervisor does not have the authority of excusing all or part of such tardiness. Employees who do not report for duty or who are late and not excused by their supervisor will be charged appropriate leave for the time absent or allowed to make up this time under the maxiflex guidelines. However, the employee may submit a written request for hazardous weather leave through appropriate supervisory channels to the respective Director or their designated appointee providing all the facts include distance between residence and place of work, mode of transportation, and what personal efforts were made to get to work. This must be done the first workday following the day in which the absence occurred. Should the Director determine, after personal review of the facts in each case, that the employee made every reasonable effort to get to work but was unable to do so because of weather conditions, official leave may be approved in part or full for the scheduled tour of duty for that day.

Examples of situations where official leave is not to be granted:

A. Employee gets snowed in at a place other than principal residence and is unable to return in time to get to work.

B. Employee's residence is some distance from nearest public road and he/she was unable to clear his/her driveway.

C. Employee did not depart his/her residence at a reasonable (earlier than normal) time, even though difficult driving conditions could be anticipated.

D. The employee's car pool, bus, etc., was unable to get to the point of pickup.

E. Any other situation that is personal in nature rather than general in scope or impact. It is a long-established principle that Federal employees are personally responsible for traveling to work and that leave is granted in sufficient amounts to take vacations as well as permit irregular or occasional absences for personal situations.

In the event an activity is closed all day, the day becomes a nonworkday for all nonessential employees; they are excused from duty without charge to personal leave or loss of pay. This

means that for the day a facility does not open, even those employees who have approved scheduled leave planned are not charged leave for the day. The Comptroller General has stated there is no authority to grant leave for a nonworkday since, under 5 U.S.C. 6302(a), days of leave for which an employee may receive compensation are exclusive of holidays and nonworkdays.

References

ARS Directive 402.6 dated 9/29/97 (amended 12/8/97)

MRP Directive 4630.1 dated 9/12/97

MRP Human Resources Desk Guide, Subchapter 4630 dated 8/97

/s/ R. L. Levings

/s/ S. A. Karli

/s/ P. K. Murray

R. L. Levings
Director, NVSL

S. A. Karli
Director, CVB

P. K. Murray
Director, NADC